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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/09/2022

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [RS](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRIA: ODIHR MONITORING OF RUSSIAN ELECTION

REF: STATE 153123

Classified By: Econ/Pol Couns Dean Yap. Reason: 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Econ/Pol Counselor met Nov. 9 with Austrian OSCE PermRep Margit Waestenfelt to discuss reftel demarche. Waestenfelt seemed at a loss as to how to respond to the Russian "game." She expected the Russians to continue to drag the process out and make it impossible for even the 70 observers invited to play an effective role. However, she did not believe ODIHR could simply walk out of the "game" without handing the Russians a propaganda victory. Pressure on the Russians to reverse their conditions and allow free ODIHR access now were not worthwhile either, because it was too late to send an assessment mission. ODIHR was no longer in a position to send a large monitoring mission. She was skeptical that a mission tailored by the Russians into purposelessness would do lasting damage.

¶2. (C) Waestenfelt was more focused, and said the EU was primarily focusing on how to counter Russian and partner efforts to re-structure ODIHR monitoring in such a way that the process would be "reduced to a formality."  
McCaw